(Rs. in lakhs)

2003-04		2004-05	
No. of SC/ST A/Cs	Amt.	No. of SC/ST A/Cs	Amt.
156,399	23,004.62	141,947	26,672.79

(b) Steps taken by Govt.

(i) Package for doubling the flow of credit to agriculture and debt relief measures for restructuring accounts of farmers in circumstances of extreme distress due to successive natural calamities or farmers in arrears.

(ii) One time settlement scheme for small and marginal farmers and a scheme for redemption of debts of farmers taken from non-institutional sources.

(iii) RBI has issued instructions to banks to issue loans upto Rs. 50000/- without insisting for collateral or margins.

(iv) Loans for agri-clinics have been made collateral free upto Rs. 5 lakhs.

(v) Based on Vyas Committee recommendations, the banks have been asked to simplify the procedure for loan sanction.

(vi) District Level Technical Committees (DLTCs) in all States have been advised by NABARD to review the existing scale of finance to meet realistic credit needs of farmers.

(c) RRBs have been successful in enhancing the outreach of the financial system besides providing loans to individual borrowal accounts. RRBs have also financed 4192 Self Help Groups (SHGs) during the year 2004-05 and cumulatively provided financial services to 17678 SHGs including bank loan of Rs. 35.63 crore in the State of Madhya Pradesh.

Abolition of TDS

246. **SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:**

(a) whether it is a fact that an expert committee appointed by Government have suggested abolition of tax deducted at source on subscriptions to corporate bonds on a par with Government securities;

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government in this regard;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government are considering to simplify the Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT); and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) Yes, Sir. The High Level Expert Committee on Corporate Bonds and Securitization, which submitted its report in December, 2005, has, *inter alia,* recommended that the Tax Deducted at Source rules for corporate bonds should be similar to the ones applicable to the Government securities.

(b) Government has not accepted this recommendation of the Committee as yet.

(c) and (d) The provisions of Fringe Benefits Tax are simple. However, further simplification, if any, would be reflected in the Finance Bill, 2006.

Evaluation of BALCO shares

247. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the owners of Sterlite Industries (India) Ltd. have opted for acquisition of the residual 49 per cent shares of Bharat Aluminium (BALCO) from Government;

(b) the details of procedure for its acquisition, particularly valuation of these shares and entities eligible for conducting valuation, stipulated in the Shareholders Agreement (SHA);

(c) whether it is a fact that SBI Caps Ltd. has been involved in the valuation process although the SHA did not select it in the list of entities competent for the job; and

(d) if so, the reasons for involving SBI Caps Ltd.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As per Clause 5.8 of the Shareholders Agreement (SHA) signed between Government of India, M/s Sterlite Industries (India) Limited (SIIL) and Bharat Aluminium Company Limited (BALCO-the Company), upon